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PAPERS

IN

POLITE ARTS

Twenty GUINEAS, the Premium offered in Class 120, were last Year adjudged to Mr. R. D. CATHERY, No. 12, Mead Row, near the Asylum, Lambeth, for his Method of fixing Chalk Drawings; the following Communication was received from him, and the specimens referred to, preserved in the Society's Repository.

SIR,

HAVING tried several experiments for the purpose of ascertaining the best, and most effectual method of fixing black and white chalk drawings, I have selected a few specimens from among them, for the inspection of the gentlemen of the Society of Arts, &c.; and have fully explained each method in the annexed paper according to the number of each specimen, hoping at the same time they will excuse the rough manner in which they are done, as it was not in my power to make drawings; they will,

however, shew that the chalk is fixed without staining the paper, or in any way injuring the drawing.

Specimen, No. I

Will bear rubbing with India-rubber with very little alteration, unless it is rubbed so hard as to injure the paper ; drawings in crayons may be fixed in the same way.

Specimen, No. II.

Will bear rubbing with India-rubber without any alteration ; each method is very simple and not expensive.

Specimen, No. III.

Is performed by the artist making his drawing on soft paper that has not been sized, such as blotting-paper ; and when it is finished washing the back of it over with a wash, and when quite dry, no rubbing can injure it, and it will harden the paper and not stain it in the least. Drawings in different coloured crayons may be fixed by the same method. This wash will be an excellent thing to wash prints with that are printed on soft paper, as it not only hardens the paper, but prevents them from being so easily stained and damaged, which soft paper is so liable to do by handling, as it is of so spongy a nature that it soaks up directly the least wet or grease it touches, and this wash is a great preserver of the paper. Aquatint prints that are printed in colours are always printed on hard paper, because

because soft paper will not do to tint with water colours, on account of the colour sinking quite through directly as it touches the paper, which the wash totally prevents. You may colour on soft paper that is washed over as well as you can on hard; better impressions can be taken on soft paper, and when washed over and pressed they cannot be distinguished from hard paper; so that printers may entirely give up the use of hard paper, as it is not fit for such delicate plates as aquatint, or mezzotint, &c. Old prints on soft paper that are broken and stained, if they are nicely cleaned and washed over, it will harden and make them look well when they are pressed, as it will take out the creases, and prevent any acid that they have been cleaned with from rotting the paper.

Specimen, No. IV.

Is washed half over on purpose that the gentlemen may see the utility of it, and try the effect of it with a pencil and colour, and to show that it does not stain or injure the paper in the least. I was obliged to do the specimen No. III. on blotting-paper, as I could not now get any paper for drawing on without the size; but if this method is approved of, I can get paper for drawing on of any colour or thickness, by ordering it at the paper manufactory to be made without being sized.

R. D. CATHERY.

February 25, 1811.

To C. TAYLOR, M. D. SEC.

Process

Process for Mr. Cathery's Methods of fixing Chalk Drawings.

Specimen, No. I.

Dissolve one ounce of the clearest gum arabic in one pint of spring-water, (beer measure,) then take a piece of the best blotting-paper according to the size of the drawing, and with a piece of sponge wet it all over; then lay the drawing on a table and lay the wet blotting-paper on the drawing, and press it gently with the hand close to the drawing, so as to just damp the chalk which may be seen by raising the paper up, and where the chalk is not damp press it on again; and when the chalk is thoroughly wet all over, the paper may be taken off; and in about ten minutes the chalk will be dry and fixed. The blotting-paper must not be too wet, and when you take the paper off the drawing, mind it is not shifted sideways, as that will evidently smear it.

Specimen, No. II.

Dissolve one ounce of the clearest gum arabic in one quart of spring water, (beer measure,) pour it into a dish according to the size of the drawing, then pass the drawing hastily through it, and lay the back of the drawing on a sheet of blotting-paper upon a slanting board, so that the water may drain off; and when the drawing is perfectly dry, you may press it in a port-folio with a weight upon it, and it will be quite flat, but if pressed while it is damp it will cockle.

Specimen,

Specimen, No. III.

To half an ounce of isinglass add one quart of water, and let it boil for a quarter of an hour in an earthen pipkin; then add two drachms of powdered allum, and when that is dissolved strain the mixture through a piece of clean linen, and while milk warm wash the back of the drawing over with a piece of sponge, and take care that nothing rubs the front of the drawing; it must be handled very gently, and when quite dry put in a press.

Specimen, No. IV.

For prints on soft paper, to half an ounce of isinglass you must add two quarts of water, with the same quantity of allum; wash the back of the prints over with it, and when dry they may be coloured with ease; the colours will not sink.

R. D. CATHERY.

*No. 9, Mead Row, near the Asylum,
Westminster Road.*

SIR,

I FIND that the best method of fixing the chalk on No. 3, the soft paper, is to get a square frame, (such as they strain canvass on for painting,) and tack the drawing on it with eight small nails, the front of the drawing towards the table, then holding the frame slanting, take the solution of isinglass and allum, and with a large camel's hair pencil wash

wash the back all over with it, so as just to wet the paper quite through and no more, and it will dry quite smooth ; this method is the best as nothing can damage the front of the drawing, the frame preventing the table or any thing else from rubbing the chalk or crayons, if ever so highly finished. The canel's hair pencil is better for use than the sponge, as you may use it more gently and with greater ease.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

R. D. CATHERY.

May 16, 1811.

To C. TAYLOR, M. D. SEC.

Five GUINEAS were this Session voted to Mr. R. D. CATHERY, No. 9, Mead Row, near the Asylum, Lambeth, for Transparent Paper, for the use of Engravers and Painters. The following Communication was received from him, and specimens of the article are preserved in the Society's Repository.

SIR,

I HAVE sent you a quire of tracing paper for the inspection of the gentlemen of the Society of Arts, &c. I am sorry I could not send it in sooner, but an accident happened to some I had made for the purpose of sending you,

you, in consequence of which I was obliged to delay the time a little longer than I might have made more. It will be of great use to engravers, as it will not turn yellow, as the tracing paper now in general use is apt to do; which takes off the transparency, and prevents the artist from seeing the drawing or painting that is under it so plain as he could wish, particularly if the drawing or painting is very delicate, or of a yellowish colour. It is very transparent, and as the pencil will mark better on this than it will on the yellow paper, it will be the better for those that trace on the ground, that is laid on the copper by means of a point and a coloured paper under it, as they will see the tracing plainer, and if laid on the copper-plate that has a ground on it, and passed through a printing press, the marks of the pencil will adhere quite perfect to the ground, and as the tracing paper is dry, it will not stick to the ground and tear it up as the other paper will sometimes, on account of its being fresh made, for if kept long it will turn yellow and thick. The longer my paper is made the better it is, and keeps clear and white. I can make and sell it for the same price as the paper which is now made; you may trace or write with a pen and ink on it, if the ink has a little ox-gall put into it. I have made and sold several quires, and have got some at home now for sale. If the gentlemen of the Society of Arts, &c. approve of it, their sanction will be of infinite service to me, as it will considerably tend to increase the sale of it.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient humble servant.

R. D. CATHERY.

No. 13, Mead Row, near the Asylum.

TO C. TAYLOR, M. D. SEC.

The

The Preparation.

Take one quart of the best rectified spirits of turpentine, and put to it a quarter of an ounce of sugar of lead finely powdered, shake it up, and let it stand a day and night, then pour it off, and add to it one pound of the best Canada balsam, set it in a gentle sand heat, and keep stirring it till it is quite mixed, when it will be fit for use; then lay your paper on a smooth board, and with a large brush, brush your paper over very even with the mixture, and then hang it upon lines to dry, and it will be fit for use in about four days.

R. D. CATHERY.

To C. TAYLOR, M. D. SEC.